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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
25 March 1955

TO : Deputy Director (Intelligence) CO/ED
SUBJECT : Impending Elections in Martinique and French Guiana
REFERENCE: OCI No. 0093/55, Subject "Impending French Elections."

1. Date: 17 April 1955; run-off ballot, 24 April 1955
2. Offices to be filled: One half of the seats in each of the general councils (local departmental legislatures). In Martinique, 18 seats are to be filled; in French Guiana seven or eight.
3. Parties participating: In Martinique: the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Radical Socialists, the Popular Republican Movement, the Rally of the Republican Left, and the Rally of the French People. In French Guiana: the Rally of the French People, the Rally of the Republican Left, and the Socialist Party.
4. Key political figures: Candidates are of local importance only.
5. Principal issues: Issues are essentially local, to a large extent personal. In general, the Socialists and the Communists represent the masses and favor the broad application of government subsidized social services. The other parties are more conservative, reflecting the interests of the economically dominant landowning, professional, and business minorities. Local popularity of individual candidates, however, is probably the most important factor involved.
6. Present Party Strength: Present membership in departmental general councils as follows: Martinique -- Socialists 13, Communists 10, Radical Socialists 4, Independent Republicans 4, Rally of the French People 1, Popular Republicans 1, independents and others 3. French Guiana -- Present composition not available. However, the Rally of the French People, the Rally of the Republican Left, and the Socialists are approximately equal in voting strength.

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7. Principal factors influencing the outcome: Local issues and personal popularity of candidates. Fraud and corruption probable.

8. Outcome of other recent relevant elections: In the last general council elections, in Martinique, the six Communists up for reelection retained their seats by an overwhelming majority. Presumably, there are four Communist (and one pro-Communist) councillors holding seats which will be filled in this election. The municipal elections of 1953 in both departments show little evidence of a trend one way or the other.

9. Probable significance for US security interests: The elections in a very small way may influence the election of Senators to the French upper house next June, inasmuch as departmental councilors help elect senators. Despite the possibility of reelection of Communists to the Martinique general council, there is a possibility that the Communists will not be able to exert substantial influence in the council, as they have been kept off the committees by the other parties. It is unlikely that the elections will be followed at all by persons in nearby Latin American countries or other European dependencies. The election in French Guiana has no significant interest for the US.

HUNTINGTON D. SHELDON
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Current Intelligence



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